PROVISIONAL

E/2003/SR.29
15 July 2003

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Substantive session of 2003

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 10 July 2003, at 10 a.m.

President:	Ms. RASI (Vice-President)	(Finland)
later:	Mr. HUSSEIN (Vice-President)	(Ethiopia)

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: (continued)

(a) FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE COUNCIL (continued)

In the absence of Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Ms. Rasi (Finland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: (agenda item 13)

(e) ENVIRONMENT (A/58/25)

(h) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN TAX MATTERS

The PRESIDENT said she took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-second session (A/58/25).

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said that, in accordance with Council resolution 1980/13, the Secretary-General reported to the Council on the progress of the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters following each of its meetings. Its 11th meeting, which had been due to take place at headquarters from 7 to 11 April 2003, had been rescheduled to be held in Geneva from 10 to 14 November 2003. Consequently, no action could be taken by the Council at its current substantive session.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUEST FOR CONVERSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL DEFENCE ORGANIZATION, AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION WITH OBSERVER STATUS WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, TO A SPECIALIZED AGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (agenda item 15) (E/2002/4)

The PRESIDENT recalled that the Council, at its 12th meeting of the resumed organizational session in New York on 24 June 2003, had decided to defer action on agenda item 15 to a later date. Consequently, no action was required at the Council's current session.

NEGOTIATION OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION TO CONSTITUTE IT AS A SPECIALIZED AGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (agenda item 16) (E/2003/60; E/C.1/2003/2; E/2003/L.19)

Draft resolution on an agreement between the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization (E/2003/L.19)

Mr. BALLAREZZO (Peru), Chairman of the Committee on Negotiations with Intergovernmental Agencies, introducing the draft resolution, said that, if adopted, it would welcome the World Tourism Organization into the United Nations family. In recognition of the significant economic and social impact of tourism, he hoped that, as well as adopting the draft resolution, the Council would hold a high-level dialogue on tourism in the course of one of its forthcoming sessions.

The PRESIDENT said she took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft resolution.

It was so decided.

Ms. SERWER (United States of America) said that her delegation had joined the consensus to adopt the draft resolution on the understanding that it would have no financial implications for the United Nations.

Ms. PIA (Andorra) and Mr. BENMELLOUK (Observer for Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the resolution and expressed the hope that the draft agreement would be approved by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

Mr. CAVALLARI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia and the associated countries of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, welcomed the draft agreement negotiated with the World Tourism Organization (WTO). The Union had already cooperated with WTO on issues such as combating child sex tourism, democratization and respect for human rights and technical and statistical methods. Wisely developed, tourism had a significant role to play in sustainable development. As one of the most dynamic economic activities of the contemporary world, it had the potential to attract private investment, generate sustained growth in gross domestic product (GDP), create jobs and enhance

understanding between different cultures. Transforming WTO into a specialized agency would provide the United Nations system with a better understanding not only of the challenges facing the tourist industry, such as terrorism and communicable diseases, but also its potential for promoting development.

Mr. FRANGIALLI (Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (WTO)) expressed his appreciation of the Council's decision to adopt the draft resolution. As a result, the United Nations would shortly have a new specialized agency for the first time since 1985. From its beginnings as an elitist form of leisure practised by a few Europeans and North Americans in the nineteenth century, tourism had begun to take on some of its modern characteristics shortly after the First World War. The authorities had started to open up representation offices abroad, as well as local tourist information centres at home. The need for international cooperation had been recognized as early as 1934, with the establishment of an important non-governmental organization (NGO), known as the International Union of Official Tourist Propaganda Organizations.

After the Second World War, tourism had played a substantial role in the Marshall Plan, as European Governments realized its potential for promoting development. The International Union of Official Travel Organizations (IUOTO), the direct predecessor of WTO, was set up in 1947 with a view to broadening international cooperation. When tourism grew in magnitude during the 1960s, thanks to increased purchasing power and leisure time, combined with a reduction in the cost of transport, newly independent countries created specialized national administrations in an attempt to benefit from tourism exchanges. The United Nations declared 1967 the International Year of Tourism and, in 1969, the General Assembly recognized the vital contribution that international tourism was making to the economic, social, cultural and educational progress of mankind and to the safeguarding of world peace. IUOTO was called upon to play a more central role in the development of tourism. Consequently, it had made the transition to an intergovernmental organization in the 1970s, and became an agency related to the United Nations system.

For almost 30 years, WTO had been working with Governments and civil society actors in the rapidly evolving field of world tourism. Cooperation with the United Nations had grown ever closer. For instance, the General Assembly had recently given its support to a Global Code

of Ethics for Tourism and had declared 2002 the International Year of Ecotourism. At the internal level, WTO had entered into the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund in 1996, aligning its personnel regulations with those of the common system. The members of WTO were very satisfied with the new draft agreement in its current form, and stressed the need for close and constant coordination among the various organs and agencies of the United Nations system, under the supervision of the Economic and Social Council.

Tourism was characterized by its multidimensional nature. It was not only a major economic sector but also contributed to the protection of the environment, the preservation of biodiversity, the conservation of cultural heritage and enhanced understanding among nations.

While there would be no financial implications for the United Nations arising from the agreement, since WTO was entirely self-financing, the essential significance of the transformation lay in the increased visibility accorded to his organization. WTO was a small agency with a big mission. By virtue of the agreement, tourism would finally be considered on an equal footing with other major activities of human society, such as industry, agriculture, transport, education, culture, health and labour.

Mr. BENMELLOUK (Observer for Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the phenomenon of tourism had begun centuries before the period that the Secretary-General of WTO had mentioned in his remarks. Tourism had long been a global concept, not just the preserve of a few Europeans and North Americans.

Mr. HUSSEIN (Ethiopia) said that tourism, if wisely used, could be an important tool for promoting development, protecting the environment and the world's cultural heritage, and a vehicle for greater understanding between peoples. At the same time, nations should work together to ensure that terrorism did not inhibit the enjoyment of the tourists themselves or the development benefits that accrued to tourist destinations. Governments should therefore refrain from imposing travel bans on certain destinations, since security could never be fully and comprehensively guaranteed. The imposition of such measures was tantamount to caving in to the terrorists.

Mr. ROSENTHAL (Guatemala) congratulated the Secretary-General of WTO on the organization's conversion into a specialized agency.

Mr. CIVILI (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) also congratulated the Secretary-General of WTO, commenting that his participation in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) would surely enrich inter-agency cooperation.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: (agenda item 3) (continued)

(a) FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE COUNCIL (continued) (E/2003/L.18)

Mr. ABOUTAHIR (Observer for Morocco), introducing the draft resolution on the World Solidarity Fund (E/2003/L.18) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was intended to reaffirm prior decisions and also to introduce some new elements to help the Fund become operational. A number of key decisions had still to be implemented, but the importance of the Fund and its stated aim of eradicating poverty and hunger by 2015 should be universally recognized. The draft resolution reiterated the General Assembly's request to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish, on an urgent basis, a high-level committee to draw up the Fund's strategy and offer guidance. The Secretary-General and the UNDP Administrator were also requested to take all necessary steps to promote and publicize the Fund, in partnership with the private sector and civil society. Developing countries were invited to identify specific projects that could be financed by the Fund. The question of the Fund's progress should be kept on the agenda of the Council and the General Assembly.

The PRESIDENT said that, in view of the spirit of consensus that had characterized the preparation of the draft resolution, he hoped that it would be adopted without any problems.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

PROVISIONAL

E/2003/SR.30
18 July 2003

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Substantive session of 2003

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 11 July 2003, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. HUSSAIN (Vice-President)	(Ethiopia)
later:	Mr. KUCHINSKY (Vice-President)	(Ukraine)
later:	Mr. SHARMA (Vice-President)	(Nepal)
later:	Mr. KUCHINSKY (Vice-President)	(Ukraine)

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

(a) FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE COUNCIL (continued)

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(b) REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (continued)

SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

In the absence of Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia) Vice-President, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (agenda item 3) (continued)

(a) FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE COUNCIL (continued) (E/2003/L.20)

(b) REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (continued) (E/2003/L.13)

Draft resolution on progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/201 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (E/2003/L.20)

The draft resolution was adopted.

Draft resolution on the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund (E/2003/L.13)

The draft resolution was adopted.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine), Vice-President, took the Chair.

SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (agenda item 5) (A/57/821-E/2003/86, A/58/85-E/2003/80 and Add.1, A/58/89-E/2003/85 and A/58/99-E/2003/94)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance, with particular attention to: (a) humanitarian financing and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance; and (b) transition from relief to development

The PRESIDENT said that the various informal briefings and panels that were planned would undoubtedly enrich the Council's knowledge of the different facets of the humanitarian work of the United Nations.

Ms. McASKIE (Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of

the United Nations (A/58/89-E/2003/85), said that the Council's humanitarian affairs segment provided a unique opportunity for the community of humanitarian organizations to share their experience with the Member States and, in turn, to receive guidance from them. Discussion of the principal challenges to more effective humanitarian action would result in practical measures to address those challenges. Pursuant to the letter and spirit of General Assembly resolution 46/182, humanitarian practitioners and stakeholders should continue to make progress in ensuring that humanitarian assistance reached recipients in a timely, effective and coordinated manner, while simultaneously ensuring that humanitarian staff were not exposed to danger.

During the past year, further efforts had been made to strengthen system-wide disaster response coordination tools and mechanisms, for example the establishment of an Advisory Board for the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) mechanism and the special focus on international urban search and rescue operations, which had proved effective after the earthquakes in Turkey and Algeria. OCHA had strengthened its cooperation with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through a joint self-assessment exercise. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and OCHA had initiated a new global partnership on environmental emergencies. A new international Chernobyl research and information network had recently been launched by the Government of Switzerland and OCHA; the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group had strengthened its regional groups in Asia and the Americas; and the Tampere Convention currently had 60 signatories and would enter into force once seven more parties had deposited their instruments of ratification or accession.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic had become a humanitarian crisis of catastrophic proportions. Its effects were exponentially aggravated by any ancillary disaster such as drought and conflict. AIDS could also worsen and prolong the impact of emergencies and reduce local coping capacities. Conversely, conflict and famine could aggravate the spread of HIV/AIDS and increase individual vulnerability to HIV infection, particularly among women and girls. Women were also central to any response to HIV/AIDS, but entrenched gender hierarchies in Africa all too often negated their role. The needs and concerns of women must be integrated into humanitarian planning and response at the strategic level. Some progress had nevertheless been made: United Nations agencies were working closely with African Governments and with donors to address the interrelated issues of HIV/AIDS, food security and governance.

Little progress had been made towards achieving the goal of systematically establishing enhanced protection capacities for women and girls in humanitarian crises. However, efforts were under way among members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Red Cross movement and United Nations agencies to ensure better implementation of policy and practice in that area, and to ensure the integration of gender perspectives into humanitarian coordination.

While the policy framework for the protection of civilians in armed conflicts was well established, the ongoing challenge was to identify and utilize more effective means of implementing those policies and principles. In Afghanistan, Burundi and Iraq, the Aide Memoire adopted by the Security Council in March 2002 had been used to develop an active collaborative framework for the protection of civilians that had yielded a more coordinated inter-agency response. Efforts by OCHA to develop the "culture of protection" concept, as directed by the Council at its previous session, had resulted in a number of workshops that had played an important role in disseminating the principles of protection among key humanitarian actors in the field, and in some cases had generated local initiatives to address protection issues.

To address the disturbing issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises, appropriate principles had been incorporated into United Nations staff policies and codes of conduct.

The Member States were to be commended for their generous support of the inter-agency Internal Displacement Unit, to which the specialized agencies had seconded staff. The Unit had provided training and capacity-building workshops and expert guidance, leading in some cases to the development of national policies on internally displaced persons, for example in Serbia and Montenegro and Uganda.

Meanwhile, IASC was continuing to implement the recommendations contained in the plan of action for strengthening the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), including the development of inter-agency needs assessment guidelines. Donors had noted that the analytical elements of both the consolidated appeals documents and the mid-year reviews had been strengthened, yet funding shortfalls continued to occur. Humanitarian actors were often forced to borrow resources from their development programmes to meet urgent needs. Greater efforts

must be made to improve priority-setting for all the consolidated appeals and to include a broader range of humanitarian actors in the appeals themselves and in common humanitarian action plans. To that end, IASC country teams had been established at the field level in order to increase the participation of the Red Cross movement and NGOs.

Such participation should be made mutually beneficial by minimizing overlap, increasing total available resources and improving transparency through increased reporting. Donors had been encouraged to require those NGOs which they funded to increase their participation in the CAP, to include requirements in the consolidated appeals, and to report to OCHA on the funds received. Improvements in the quality of financial reporting from agencies had rendered possible greater in-depth analysis of the funding situation for the appeals and had thus explained why some of them were underfunded. Better information should result in more effective targeting and more efficient use of resources on the ground.

The global humanitarian financing system was in need of substantial reform, despite the fact that overall humanitarian assistance levels had increased in recent years. The core humanitarian mandate to protect lives and mitigate suffering would be compromised if certain serious weaknesses in the system were not addressed. Of particular concern was the fact that the current system was not geared towards ensuring a response proportionate to the need. As a result of press attention, millions of dollars had been raised for Iraq within a few weeks. Although such generosity was both welcome and essential, millions of civilians in other countries needed urgent assistance as well. It was unacceptable to place a lower value on human life in one part of the world than in another.

An International Meeting on Good Humanitarian Donorship had recently been held in Stockholm, at which the Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship and an Implementation Plan for Good Humanitarian Donorship had been adopted. It was important, however, to stress that good donorship was a three-way commitment. Practitioners should fulfil their obligations by completing work on an improved set of common criteria for identifying and assessing risks, needs and responsibilities.

The role of the United Nations in promoting and upholding principles and standards was crucial to ensuring more equitable aid flows. The assessment, monitoring and evaluation practices of the United Nations should be developed and its advocacy efforts refocused. In addition, there should be more consistent interaction between field offices and headquarters throughout the system.

With regard to the transition from relief to development, it was clear that humanitarian assistance alone would not provide a solution to ongoing crises; unless attention was paid to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, countries would slip back into war and the humanitarian efforts would be wasted. Humanitarian aid should be delivered in a way that did not hamper long-term development. The Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Group had consequently established a Joint Working Group on Transition Issues, aimed at providing guidance to the United Nations system and proposing measures to strengthen the capacity of country teams to respond to the challenges of managing transition.

Mr. DUQUE GONZALEZ (Joint Inspection Unit, (JIU)), introducing the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Evaluation of United Nations system response in East Timor: coordination and effectiveness" (A/58/85-E/2003/80), said that the report highlighted the wealth of lessons to be drawn from the experience of the United Nations system in East Timor, particularly with regard to coordination among United Nations organizations in an emergency and post-conflict situation. The report should provide the Council with useful insights for its consideration of issues such as emergency preparedness and the transition from relief to development assistance. Among other things, the report called for more coordinated efforts by United Nations organizations to reform and enhance their emergency-response capabilities within the framework of the IASC and to link their operational roles and responsibilities to their institutional capacity and capabilities. In that context, he welcomed the assurances by the members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) that comprehensive policy guidelines were being defined to address the type of problems experienced in East Timor. He also welcomed the establishment of the Joint Working Group on Transition

Issues by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Group with a view to improving the coherence of United Nations response in periods of transition.

With regard to the resource-mobilization mechanisms used to respond to post-conflict transitions, experience with the World Bank-administered Trust Fund for East Timor (TFET) had proved disappointing for the United Nations agencies, almost none of which had received any funding. Recommendations 11 and 12 in the report proposed some remedial actions in that regard, while recommendations 5 to 8 broadly reflected the Council's concern about consistent shortfalls in the response to the CAP and about the need to align the United Nations system's existing planning tools.

One of the factors that affected donors' decisions to allocate resources to the CAP was the emergency-response capability of a given organization in terms of the quality of the projects it submitted and its overall credibility in the area of emergency response. Efforts to address the sectoral gaps within the CAP would therefore benefit from the strengthening and reform of organizations' institutional capabilities for emergency response. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that the CAP did not create a competitive atmosphere that resulted in disincentives for good programming rather than on the identification of real needs.

General discussion

Mr. BOUCHAARA (Observer for Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the comprehensive and informative report provided by the Secretary-General (A/58/89-E/2003/85). The guiding principles contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 should continue to form the basis for the United Nations system's response to humanitarian emergencies. As primary responsibility for organizing humanitarian assistance lay with the affected State, it was essential to build up capacity at the local and national levels. The affected State must also make it easier for humanitarian organizations to deliver food, shelter and medical care. At the same time, international cooperation, principally in the areas of capacity-building, the transfer of appropriate technologies and the development of early-warning systems, was vital if developing countries were to cope with the natural disasters to which they were prone.

He welcomed the efforts of IASC to develop codes of conduct for humanitarian staff and stressed the need for a gender-specific approach in the planning and implementation of humanitarian aid activities.

As far as the various armed conflicts around the world were concerned, it was important to remind all parties to such conflicts of their obligations under international humanitarian law. Humanitarian workers must be granted safe and unrestricted access to the affected populations, while the coordination of humanitarian assistance, must be strengthened. Coordination was particularly important in the transition from the emergency phase to the development phase. The gap in resource allocation between the two phases must be bridged: all too often, resources dried up when the media spotlight moved away from the humanitarian emergency and the difficult phase of reconstruction and development began. The international community must pay due attention to the specific needs of the least developed countries affected by armed conflict, natural disasters and other crises and, in the light of the considerable humanitarian impact of HIV/AIDS and other widespread diseases, to provide more resources for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

While the involvement during the past decade of new actors, including NGOs, in the field of humanitarian assistance was a welcome development, it also raised problems of coordination, duplication and overlap. Closer coordination between all actors was therefore necessary to ensure the success of humanitarian operations. The Group of 77 and China supported the introduction of a global system for humanitarian funding and was concerned about the large decrease in funding for humanitarian purposes, while stressing that contributions to humanitarian assistance should not reduce the resources allocated to international cooperation for development.

Mr. BRUNI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia and the associated countries of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, as well as Iceland, said that the coordination, financing and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, the transition from relief to development and the effects of AIDS and other diseases on development were subjects that the Union found particularly important. There had been some significant developments in the area of humanitarian assistance during the past year. One of them had been

the establishment of the Joint Working Group on Transition Issues to study the challenges related to the transition from relief to development. Humanitarian assistance should be supportive of recovery and long-term development and should promote self-reliance among the affected populations, as a sound transition phase could help prevent the recurrence of conflicts.

The efforts of the United Nations in addressing the crisis in Iraq had highlighted the importance of contingency planning and preparedness, effective coordination within the United Nations system and between the United Nations and occupying Powers, and appropriate interaction between humanitarian actors and the military. With regard to attacks on humanitarian personnel, the Union expected the International Criminal Court to play an important role in deterring such attacks and in bringing those responsible for them to justice. The Union supported the efforts of the Security Council to address the issue of the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict and welcomed the adoption by IASC of minimum standards of behaviour for United Nations civilian staff members.

Humanitarian assistance had more than doubled in recent years, demonstrating the increasing commitment of donors to responding to both long-standing and emerging crises. The Union contributed almost half of global humanitarian assistance and continued to pay special attention to "forgotten crises", intervening where few other donors were present or where specific sectoral needs were not covered. Noting that many of the projects funded by the Union were carried out by United Nations funds and agencies, he drew attention to the financial and administrative agreement signed by the United Nations and the European Commission in April 2003 to facilitate a closer partnership in the areas of development and humanitarian aid.

The Union recognized that many steps could be taken to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of donors' actions and accountability to beneficiaries, and welcomed moves to establish principles of good donorship behaviour and practice. Such principles included improving needs assessment, providing more predictable, timely and needs-based funding, earmarking fewer contributions and paying more attention to the lessons from evaluations.

There was more to the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, however, than the level and allocation of funding: it also depended on inter-agency coordination. In that respect, he emphasized the central and unique role of the United Nations, through OCHA, in providing

leadership and coordinating international humanitarian action. More needed to be done, particularly in the areas of monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that United Nations organizations, the Red Cross movement and NGOs were able to deliver high-quality humanitarian assistance with maximum speed and efficiency.

At the same time, given that the affected countries had primary responsibility for taking care of the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their borders, humanitarian responses should be based, as far as possible, on the full involvement of the affected communities. The Union was therefore committed to strengthening the capacity of affected countries and local communities to prevent, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises.

Mr. YAMAMOTO (Japan), having paid tribute to the tireless efforts of humanitarian personnel to save the lives of vulnerable people all over the world under extremely difficult conditions, said that several lessons could be drawn from recent experience in the humanitarian field, the first of them being the importance of early preparedness. In that connection, he stressed the vital coordinating role of OCHA which, though not itself an operational agency, deserved the full cooperation of all operational agencies in the field. Without the concerted efforts of OCHA and the United Nations agencies, the international community would have faced a much worse humanitarian tragedy in Iraq, for example.

Secondly, a seamless transition from relief to development was vital for post-conflict nation-building. Development agencies should therefore be involved in planning and fund-raising at an early stage of humanitarian activities. A comparison between the approaches to the transition in Iraq and in Afghanistan would provide much useful information for future efforts to ensure a smooth transition from relief to development.

Thirdly, the international community had a collective responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance. Coordination was important not only among the humanitarian agencies but also among donors and between the agencies and donors. In that respect, he welcomed the holding of the Stockholm International Meeting on Good Humanitarian Donorship. At the same time, it should be realized that the requirements that donors imposed by earmarking funds or requiring evaluations were based on Governments' need to be accountable to their taxpayers.

There was a danger that too much emphasis on harmonization would lead to the needs of specific donors being disregarded, and that could make it extremely difficult for them to retain taxpayers' support and maintain their current levels of humanitarian assistance.

In that connection, failure to improve Japan's underrepresentation among humanitarian personnel would impede his Government's efforts to maintain its current level of funding. In the meantime, it was striving to address crises in the most equitable manner possible, distributing food aid to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and preparing to host the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development in September 2003.

Mr. CALLAN (Australia) said that each of the topics addressed in the Secretary-General's report justified deeper analysis and stronger coordination by the United Nations. The aim of the humanitarian affairs segment of the Council's session was to enhance the impact and quality of humanitarian efforts and improve the credibility of the United Nations in the minds of donors and recipients alike. Although his Government strongly supported the central role of OCHA in humanitarian advocacy, policy and coordination, welcomed the mechanisms that had been established to deal with natural disasters and complex emergencies and appreciated the many steps taken by the United Nations system to strengthen inter-agency cooperation and coordination, it was aware that much remained to be done. The United Nations needed to produce better assessments of humanitarian needs and there should be better cooperation between the agencies in the field and between the agencies and other stakeholders. Managing the emergency cycle and the transition from relief to development called for stronger analysis and greater continuity of efforts. Humanitarian actors needed to be more accountable to key stakeholders, including beneficiaries. Furthermore, it was necessary to learn lessons from the past in order to strengthen the impact of humanitarian responses.

His Government welcomed the steps that had been taken by the United Nations over the previous year to mainstream gender into its policies and programmes and to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. It was equally necessary to recognize women as effective agents for peace and recovery.

Most of Australia's aid was focused on the Asia-Pacific region. For example, his Government had recently supported the organization of an OCHA workshop for Pacific Rim States on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. It was ready to work with other donors to help restore law and order in the Solomon Islands and bring about an economic recovery there.

Australia's aid programmes were designed to address the root causes of conflict and instability and to support durable solutions. It was guided by a specific Peace, Conflict and Development Policy launched in June 2002. His Government had supported humanitarian financing studies and would endeavour to apply the conclusions of the Stockholm International Meeting on Good Humanitarian Donorship.

Mr. NEBENZI (Russian Federation) said that coordination mechanisms and instruments in the field of the United Nations humanitarian operations, such as IASC and the CAP, were working fairly well. However, it should be noted that the proportion of humanitarian resources channelled by donors through the United Nations had declined relative to the proportion allocated through NGOs and bilateral cooperation.

National and international strategies needed to be developed to prepare adequately for and react rapidly to emergencies, and to emphasize rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes in the aftermath of emergencies. The smooth transition from relief to development would contribute greatly to international peacemaking and national reconciliation. It was therefore important to ensure that the efforts of the international community were coordinated under the auspices of the United Nations. All the main actors involved in post-conflict or post-disaster development should have a level of reserves sufficient to minimize their reliance on donor funding, which was often sporadic and inadequate. Thought should be given to the funding of reconstruction and development at the earliest possible stage.

It was also essential to bridge the gap in financing and strategic planning that existed between emergency assistance measures and subsequent development activities. Funding for high-profile emergencies should not be allowed to divert attention from those that were less visible. His Government supported the idea of developing a global system of financial oversight

of humanitarian assistance in order to ensure better coordination and transparency, and endorsed the view that there needed to be a clearer definition of humanitarian assistance and its link with development assistance.

Post-conflict situations cried out for increased cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, with both bodies providing mutual feedback. Ad hoc advisory groups, such as the advisory group on Guinea-Bissau, had shown that the Council could play a useful role in conflict prevention and peacemaking. That ad hoc advisory group had also demonstrated the value of tailored solutions for countries emerging from crises, i.e. countries that were not normally attractive financial propositions from a donor country perspective. Political instability was a powerful disincentive to providing assistance. The Security Council's efforts to resolve the political situation in a given country were therefore essential prerequisites for the implementation of the economic recommendations made by ad hoc advisory groups.

Humanitarian assistance should always be made available in a spirit of neutrality, humanity, impartiality, without political preconditions, and with respect for a State's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Assistance should be given only with the recipient country's consent and in accordance with international law and domestic legislation.

Ms. SERWER (United States of America) said that, although progress had been made towards peace in places such as Sierra Leone and Sudan, there had been further outbreaks of violence in other countries such as Liberia, where the fighting had made it virtually impossible to provide humanitarian assistance. Likewise, the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to be plagued by obstacles. The recent upsurge of violence in the Ituri district had, once again, left the civilian population bereft of hope and the campaign of sexual violence in South Kivu Province and elsewhere was a matter of deep concern.

HIV/AIDS continued to have devastating effects at both the individual and regional levels. The pandemic not only claimed lives, it also indirectly destroyed livelihoods and undermined agricultural productivity that helped to prevent famine. Other challenges ahead included the need to support Iraq and Afghanistan on the difficult path from relief to reconstruction. The recent humanitarian response in Iraq illustrated the importance of effective coordination between all concerned actors.

She noted the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the Code of Conduct for United Nations Staff to prevent sexual abuse and welcomed the progress made towards good practices in the field, particularly in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She urged all humanitarian workers to adhere to the Code's core principles.

To address the numerous humanitarian challenges of the world, an approach should be envisaged that transcended humanitarian response. In complex emergencies, efforts must be made to protect and assist vulnerable civilian populations while simultaneously engaging political actors in solutions at a variety of levels. Efforts should be made to address underlying causes of conflict and natural disasters and to focus on durable solutions.

All parties needed to carry a portion of the shared responsibility. Her Government intended to act on the recommendations of the Stockholm International Meeting on Good Donorship and to take an active part in furthering the Implementation Plan. Her delegation encouraged the United Nations agencies to continue to improve inter-agency strategies and to prioritize needs.

Mr. LI Tianwu (China), having said that his delegation supported the statement made by the observer for Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, endorsed the Council's decision to focus on strengthening the coordination of the United Nations humanitarian assistance and agreed with the Secretary-General's overall review and analysis of the situation. Providing humanitarian assistance was a serious challenge, particularly in view of the number of natural disasters and armed conflicts that had taken place over the past year, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the ever-growing number of refugees and internally displaced persons.

When providing humanitarian assistance, the United Nations and the international community should adhere strictly to the guiding principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 46/182 for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance and should act with humanity, neutrality and impartiality, in full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the recipient States. Humanitarian assistance activities should be initiated in response to an appeal by the State concerned, without any conditions attached.

Adequate funding was necessary for the transition from relief to development. The CAP had played an important role in financing humanitarian assistance. In recent years, however, the level of financing through that channel had been falling steadily. In 2002, some countries had encountered funding shortages of up to 70 per cent. In conclusion, he expressed his gratitude to OCHA for having provided assistance to China after the earthquake in Xinjiang at the beginning of 2003.

Mr. HUSSEIN (Pakistan), having endorsed the statement made by the observer for Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the transition from relief to development was a very difficult process, because sustained and unhindered international support was often not forthcoming. The provision of adequate, predictable and stable humanitarian financing to meet the requirements of the humanitarian agencies was a very important component of international strategies to improve humanitarian crisis management.

As one of the largest troop-contributing countries to the United Nations peacekeeping operations, Pakistan was particularly concerned by the fact that the lives of peacekeepers were frequently in jeopardy. All parties should fulfil their responsibilities under international humanitarian law to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel. There should be no impunity for the perpetrators of violence against humanitarian workers.

The displacement of 19 million people worldwide highlighted the enormity of the challenge facing the international community. The provision of durable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation and resettlement, could be realized only through the effective realization of the principle of burden and responsibility sharing. The restrictive asylum frameworks adopted by many countries continued to hinder durable solutions.

Early warning and timely action at the regional and international levels were essential if unstable situations were to be brought under control. A unified and coordinated approach to disaster management, guided by humanitarian principles, had yet to become a reality. The United Nations should work closely with Governments, to formulate disaster-management strategies, addressing the wasteful use of natural resources, ill-planned urbanization, distorted demographic growth and abject underdevelopment. Collective efforts should be geared towards rehabilitation and facilitating self-reliance.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. FRISCH (Observer for Switzerland) said that the Swiss authorities were fully committed to participating in humanitarian aid efforts based on the principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality. The methods used to secure international humanitarian financing should be considered within a broader context, taking into account the periods before and after a conflict or disaster. It was essential to make better use of all the political instruments available in order to avoid having recourse to international humanitarian assistance.

His Government welcomed the work of the Joint Working Group on Transition Issues and was eagerly awaiting its results and recommendations. During the transition phase, priority should be given to activities to prevent and prepare for emergency situations, involving all stakeholders in the process. The Secretary-General's report rightly highlighted the role of IASC in the consultation and decision-making processes between humanitarian organizations and agencies.

Furthermore, all parties to a conflict should honour their commitments under international humanitarian law. His Government would continue to promote full respect for and the dissemination of that law and urged all States that had not yet done so to ratify the optional protocols to the Geneva Conventions. Equal importance should be given to human rights and to the rights of refugees.

For humanitarian work to be effective, the staff of humanitarian organizations should have unhindered access to all peoples and individuals in distress. All parties to a conflict should fully respect the independence of humanitarian organizations. Deliberate attacks against humanitarian workers were unacceptable. The perpetrators of such attacks must be prosecuted without delay. Furthermore, more attention should be accorded to the protection of the civilian population, particularly women and children. He hoped that the current discussions would help to strengthen the coordination of international humanitarian assistance.

Mr. Kuchinsky, (Ukraine), Vice-President, resumed the Chair.

Mr. GOPINATHAN (India) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the observer for Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and appreciated the sections in the Secretary-General's report on humanitarian financing. It was heartening to learn that the overall levels of humanitarian aid had doubled since 1990. Despite its resource constraints, India provided assistance in the true spirit of South-South cooperation. For example, it had recently announced that humanitarian assistance totalling US$ 20 billion had been made available for the people of Iraq, the bulk of which would be channelled through the United Nations.

A major concern, however, was that the growth in the volume of humanitarian assistance had been accompanied by an overall decline in the flows of official development assistance (ODA), since, in the long term, development assistance reduced the need for emergency assistance. In addition, humanitarian assistance was clearly not being distributed on the basis of need. Donor decisions to allocate resources were apparently driven, not by need, but by domestic considerations, traditional patterns of expenditure and geopolitical interests.

The Secretary-General's report pointed to a number of disturbing trends in the area of humanitarian financing. For example, countries in sub-Saharan Africa were experiencing shortfalls in the level of response to the CAP of up to 70 per cent, lending justification to claims of humanitarian favouritism and calling into question the equity of the distribution of humanitarian assistance. In addition, the Secretary-General had drawn attention to the lack of consistency in the way in which humanitarian needs were assessed and the inability to address "forgotten emergencies". The Council should reiterate the need for adherence to the tenets on humanitarian assistance contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

He looked forward to considering the forthcoming report of the Joint Working Group on Transition Issues, and to commenting on the transition from relief to development on a later occasion. Humanitarian assistance in post-conflict situations should avoid bypassing the national Government, as to do so was likely to undermine its authority. The report contained a confusing reference to the Internal Displacement Unit, given that the mandate of that Unit was explicitly non-operational. He expected that mandate to be fully respected. The guiding principles outlined in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 remained the most appropriate framework for humanitarian assistance.

Ms. KANG Kyung-wha (Republic of Korea) drew attention to the blatant disrespect for humanitarian work and specific targeting of humanitarian personnel by belligerents in some conflict situations. It was important to enhance operational security, for instance through additional security training for humanitarian workers, and also to ensure that those responsible for attacks on humanitarian personnel were swiftly brought to justice.

She called for greater integration of a gender perspective into emergency humanitarian assistance, for instance through the policies and guidelines developed by IASC. She hoped that gender mainstreaming would also feature strongly in the report of the Joint Working Group on Transition Issues.

In view of the uncertainty that frequently reigned in situations of humanitarian emergency, it was far from clear whether there were sufficient resources for responding to the need for life-saving assistance throughout the world. While the recommendations on humanitarian financing contained in the Secretary-General's report were useful, it was also important to ensure the effective use of resources on the ground. In that regard, she welcomed the measures to strengthen the United Nations country teams.

Mr. SKURATOVSKYI (Ukraine) said that his delegation welcomed the reported progress towards the settlement of long-standing conflicts, such as those in Afghanistan, Angola and Sierra Leone, but was most concerned about the re-emergence of conflicts in other parts of the world. He called upon the Governments and parties to conflicts to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel. He endorsed the Secretary-General's appeal for implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which addressed the need for decisive action on the epidemic in conflict areas. In particular, States should step up efforts to prevent the spread of HIV among humanitarian workers and international peacekeepers.

In relation to the transition from relief to development, he referred to the experience of his country in attempting to mitigate the lingering consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. His Government attached special significance to the role of the United Nations in strengthening the

international response to that catastrophe, and commended the work done by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl. He looked forward to the further support of the international community in implementing the new strategy for recovery, which focused on the transition from relief to long-term development.

Mr. GULLET (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that a new attitude towards humanitarian assistance was required, including the following three elements: a resolve to address problems in a more holistic manner; long-term perspective, focusing on sustainable recovery from the outset; and the promotion and protection of women in all humanitarian operations. His organization was pleased to have taken part in the recent Stockholm Conference, and was working actively, in conjunction with IASC, to promote guiding principles for humanitarian financing, such as the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Relief.

While the transition from conflict to recovery was vitally important, countries emerging from natural disasters deserved just as much attention. The role of civil society in underpinning a sustainable transition should be given high priority, and tended to be undervalued in current transition models. The 2003 edition of the World Disasters Report, entitled Ethics in Aid, would be launched by his organization within the next few weeks. It contained important details concerning future developments in humanitarian financing and transition issues. The twenty-eighth International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in December 2003, which was scheduled to focus on the issue of protecting human dignity, would have the special task of translating the messages of Council debates and resolutions on humanitarian assistance into action.

Ms. MARCHAND (Observer for Canada) said that the past year had been dominated by events in Iraq, which had posed a number of dilemmas for humanitarian actors: how was it possible to manage pressures for a generous humanitarian response in Iraq while addressing pressing humanitarian needs in less visible contexts; how could contingency plans be developed as swiftly as possible, and how could the independence of humanitarian action be guaranteed, when Governments were at once belligerents, donors and humanitarian actors?

Humanitarian agencies had also begun to confront the challenge of responding to crises exacerbated by HIV/AIDS, but coordination with development actors, including national Governments, was essential to achieve the necessary long-term focus.

Flagrant violations of the most fundamental principles of international humanitarian and human rights law continued to occur. Rhetorical commitments by Governments to international law must be translated into action, so as to protect innocent civilians at the country level. On the other hand, she welcomed the progress made in addressing sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises. The plan of action developed by IASC, as well as the forthcoming United Nations Bulletin, would provide clear guidance to the agencies on ways of tackling that issue.

Welcoming the activities of the Joint Working Group on Transition Issues, she said that successful transitions from relief to development were dependent on the involvement of political, human rights and peacekeeping actors. Critical issues such as security, justice and reconciliation also needed to be addressed. She urged the Working Group to engage actively in its work the Department of Political Affairs, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Donor Governments had a major role to play in ensuring successful transitions. Through its Peacebuilding Fund, Landmines Initiative and Human Security Program, Canada had tried to address the issue responsibly. However, it had neither the resources nor the capacity to respond to every transitional situation at the global level. Consequently, the issue should be addressed in a more integrated manner, rather than in the humanitarian segment alone, at the Council's next substantive session.

It was clear that donor Governments' responses to crises were not primarily needs based, and that humanitarian agency appeals were not grounded in a rigorous assessment of needs. The extent of the challenge could be seen from the fact that the Iraq Crisis flash appeal had attracted 10 times as much as the appeal for the Democratic Republic of Congo. The need to mobilize the same will and resources for less visible crises was acute. The recent Stockholm Conference was an important step towards strengthening the multilateral humanitarian system, to ensure greater consistency, accountability and performance.

Nevertheless, States had primary responsibility for victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders. Where they were unable to fulfil that responsibility, they were obliged to facilitate the work of the international community in doing so. Humanitarian agencies had a key role to play in ensuring the effectiveness of humanitarian action. Therefore they should take the lead in improving the consistency of humanitarian appeals, introducing greater transparency in priority setting, and strengthening efforts to report on results, evaluate operations, and enhance system-wide coordination.

Mr. PAIVA (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that his organization had participated actively in IASC, and strongly supported the efforts made by OCHA to improve coordination among the international agencies responding to complex emergencies. The ongoing streamlining of planning for emergencies, particularly under the CAP, benefited highly operational organizations such as IOM. He welcomed the increased emphasis on strategic inputs and the comparative advantages of agencies, as well as the attention given to rights-based assistance. Integrated transition planning remained the key factor in reducing future conflict sensitivity.

The task of dealing with population displacements resulting from complex emergencies was becoming increasingly difficult. Agencies working together and pooling their expertise could provide far stronger international responses. He deeply regretted the attacks on humanitarian personnel in conflict areas, and strongly supported the calls for bringing the perpetrators to justice in the States concerned.

Ms. MAMADOVA (Azerbaijan) said that her Government attached special importance to the problems related to internal displacement, and considered any efforts to improve the living conditions of displaced people to be of vital significance. It was deeply regrettable that the issue of Azerbaijan's large displaced population had been overlooked in the Secretary-General's report. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had been particularly active in her country, and she called for its continued support in overcoming the remaining problems. Welcoming the work of the Internal Displacement Unit, she stressed the need for even greater coordination between the various relief agencies.

Protecting the rights of women and girls during armed conflict should be given a high priority. One of the devastating consequences following her country's conflict with Armenia was the long list of missing persons, most of whom were women. Her Government had identified gender mainstreaming as a priority in its national strategy for emerging from conflict, and was making efforts to enhance equal representation in all structures, and create new jobs for internally displaced women. In that regard, she welcomed the Women in the South Caucasus for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building project being implemented by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

A critical emergency had arisen in her country since the beginning of the year, due to serious flooding and landslides, which had affected at least 40,000 people. The damage caused to the power supply, communications and basic infrastructure was beyond the capacity of her Government to repair. She called for assistance from all the relevant stakeholders to alleviate the situation.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.